



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

IN OPPOSITION TO SB 83 - AAC Sunday Hunting

Testimony by: Laura Simon, Field Director, Urban Wildlife Program
Annie Hornish, Connecticut State Director
Committee: Joint Committee on the Environment
Date: March 6, 2012

Dear Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of The Humane Society of the United States, the nation's largest animal protection organization with more than 11 million supporters, including more than 165,000 in Connecticut, I strongly urge the Environment Committee to **OPPOSE** Senate Bill 83 and any other attempts to expand hunting on Sundays.

The introduction of SB 83 is a veiled and disingenuous first step in an effort to allow all forms of hunting on Sundays in Connecticut. Bill proponents say that this bill pertains to private land only. However, the bill's language is vague. Hunters are merely required to carry written permission to hunt on private property, *but nowhere does the language stipulate that Sunday hunting is **restricted to private property***. This is a crucial distinction – and one that has the potential to open up all Connecticut land for Sunday hunting without any transparency or allowance for public input.

Taking the first step down this slippery slope would further the interests of a tiny fraction of the population at the expense of other citizens who have their own claim to enjoying nature. Other states, such as New Jersey and Maryland, have opened limited forms of Sunday hunting in one legislative session and then immediately proposed a complete repeal of the Sunday hunting prohibition in the following legislative session.

According to the most recent data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, wildlife watchers outnumber hunters in the Connecticut by a margin of 29 to 1. Wildlife watching and other outdoor recreation is an important part of Connecticut's economy. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, wildlife watchers in Connecticut outspend hunters 7 to 1, contributing about \$510 million to the economy annually.

Hunters already enjoy recreational opportunities disproportionate with their numbers -- hunting is already permitted 6 days a week for most of the year. It is only fair that given their overwhelming majority of the state's population, non-hunters have one day per week to enjoy Connecticut's rich natural resources in safety and peace.

Sunday hunting will not reduce Lyme disease risk one iota, contrary to what bill proponents are saying:

The Black-legged tick has well over 100 hosts, including all mammals, many popular songbirds, and even lizards. Studies have shown that the removal of one host isn't enough to suppress the Lyme-disease causing tick (Ostfeld, 2011, Jordan et al, 2007). In addition, the ticks are highly adaptable, and will switch to other hosts when there's a shortage of their preferred host, or congregate in higher densities on the remaining deer. In addition, research indicates that hunting may put the public *more at risk* by creating disease "hot spots" (S. Perkins et al, 2006, Ginsberg

and Zhioua, 1999; Ostfeld, 2011) That is, mature ticks that normally latch onto large hosts (i.e. deer) are more likely to end up on people and dogs after deer numbers have been reduced.

There's a good reason why the CDC and health authorities don't recommend hunting to control Lyme disease – because it doesn't work.

Sunday hunting won't help the DEEP "manage" deer numbers or resolve deer-

This legislation takes us in precisely the wrong direction. The public does not want hunting on Sundays, and lifting the prohibition will jeopardize public safety and diminish outdoor opportunities for non-consumptive users.

There is no compelling reason to disrupt the status quo in order to appease a tiny minority of residents. **We strongly urge the committee to reject this attempt to remove the prohibition on Sunday hunting in Connecticut.**

Thank you for your time and consideration of our views.

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